

Pearson also agreed to instruct Seaborn and his people in general to work more actively on trying to break the Poles off from constant and active espousal of North Vietnamese aggression. He felt, however, that the Poles are playing something of a middle role in Sino-Soviet matters these days and doubted that there would be much profit in this.

Sullivan/RUSK

→ May 15, 1964

AmEmb Saigon 2212 (S/Nodis), Rec'd 15 May 64, 7:2 A.M.

FOR THE PRESIDENT FROM LODGE

3. If prior to the Canadian's trip to Hanoi there has been a terroristic act of the proper magnitude, then I suggest that a specific target in North Viet Nam be considered as a prelude to his arrival. The Vietnamese Air Force must be made capable of doing this, and they should undertake this type of action.

4. I much prefer a selective use of Vietnamese Air power to an over U.S. effort perhaps involving the total annihilation of all that has been built in North Viet Nam since 1954, because this would surely bring in the Chinese Communists, and might well bring in the Russians. Moreover, if you lay the whole country waste, it is quite likely that you will induce a mood of fatalism in the Viet Cong. Also, there will be nobody left in North Viet Nam on whom to put pressure. Furthermore, South Viet Nam's infrastructure might well be destroyed. What we are interested in here is not destroying Ho Chi Minh (as his successor would probably be worse than he is), but getting him to change his behavior. That is what President Kennedy was trying to do in October with Diem and with considerable success.

6. This is a procedure the intensity of which we can constantly control and bring up to the point to which we think the Communist reaction would cease to be manageable. It should be covert and undertaken by the Vietnamese, but, of course, we must be clear in our own minds that we are ready and able to take care of whatever reaction there may be.

7. It is easy for us on the one hand to ignore our superiority as we did at the time of Berlin in 1948 (when we still had sole possession of the atomic bomb). It is also a relatively simple concept to go out and destroy North Viet Nam. What is complicated,

TOP SECRET - NODIS

but really effective, is to bring our power to bear in a precise way so as to get specific results.

8. Another advantage of this procedure is that when, as and if the time ever came that our military activities against the North became overt, we would be in a strong moral position both with regard to U.S. public opinion, the U.S. Congress, and the U.N. I say this because we would then have a record to show that we had given Ho Chi Minh fair warning to stop his murderous interference in the internal affairs of Viet Nam. Not only would we have given him fair warning, but we would have given him honest and valuable inducements in the way of some withdrawal of American personnel and in the way of economic aid, notably food. . . .

LODGE

May 22, 1964

STATE 2049 to AmEmb SAIGON (TS/NODIS), Priority, Sent 22 May 64, 7:40 P.M.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR AMBASSADOR FROM SECRETARY

2. . . . in light of present Canadian attitudes we tend to see real difficulty in approaching the Canadians at this time with any message as specific as you suggest, i.e., that Hanoi be told by the Canadians "that they will be punished." But we are keeping this in mind and will see whether we can go further when we consult them next week than the more general type of message stated in my 1821. As you can see, the more specific message might lead us into a very difficult dialogue with the Canadians as to just what our plans really were.

3. On the other question, whether initial substantial attacks could be left without acknowledgement, it is our present view here that this would simply not be feasible. . . . Once such publicity occurred, I think you can see that the finger would point straight at us and that the President would then be put in perhaps a far more difficult position toward the American public and the Congress.

4. Thus, we are using a GVN- or US-acknowledged enterprise as part of our main planning track at the present time, although we do recognize that something a little stronger than the present OPLAN 34-A might be carried on on the basis you propose.

BUNDY

May 25, 1964

AmEmbassy SAIGON 2305 (TS/Nodis), Rec'd 25 May 64, 5:22 AM.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LODGE

1. It is not rpt not at all necessary that the Canadians either agree or disagree. What is important is that the Canadian transmit the message and be willing to do that and report back accurately what is said. . . .

2. The Communists have a great advantage over us in that they do things and never talk about them. We must not rpt not let them continue to have this advantage. . . .

LODGE

May 26, 1964

AmEmbassy SAIGON 2318 (TS/Nodis), Rec'd 26 May 64, 3:30 A.M.

LITERALLY EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY FROM LODGE

1. . . .

2. I am coming to the conclusion that we cannot reasonably and prudently expect a much better performance out of the GVN than that which we are now getting unless something new of this kind is brought into the picture. . . .

LODGE

May 30, 1964

STATE 2133 to AmEmbassy SAIGON (TS/Exdis), Priority, Sent 30 May 1964, 10:40 A.M.

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY

President and Mac Bundy met May 28 in New York with Canadian Prime Minister Pearson. Simultaneously Sullivan met in Ottawa with Foreign Minister Martin, Deputy Under Secretary Smith, and ICC Commissioner-Designate Seaborn.

President told Pearson that he wishes Hanoi to know, that while he is a man of peace, he does not intend to permit the North Vietnamese to take over Southeast Asia. He needs a confidential and responsible interlocutor to carry the message of US attitudes to Hanoi. In outlining the US position there was some discussions of QTE carrots and sticks UNQUOTE.

TOP SECRET - NODIS

Pearson, after expressing willingness to lend Canadian good offices to this endeavor, indicated some concern about this nature of the QTE sticks UNQTE. He stipulated that he would have great reservations about the use of nuclear weapons, but indicated that the punitive striking of discriminate targets by careful iron bomb attacks would be QTE a different thing UNQTE. He said he would personally understand our resort to such measures if the messages transmitted through the Canadian channel failed to produce any alleviation of North Vietnamese aggression, and that Canada would transmit messages around this framework.

In Ottawa Sullivan found much the same disposition among Canadian officials. While Foreign Minister Martin seemed a little nervous about the prospect of QTE expanding the war UNQTE, External Affairs officials readily assented to the use of Seaborn as an interlocutor.

Seaborn, who struck Sullivan as an alert, intelligent and steady officer, readily agreed to these conditions and has made immediate plans for an accelerated departure.

BALL

June 1, 1964

Memo To: G - Mr. U. Alexis Johnson, from S/VN - Joseph A. Mendelhall,
dated June 1, 1964 (TS)

Subject: Instructions for Canadian Interlocutor with Hanoi.

I am enclosing a copy of the "Outline of Subjects for Mr. Seaborn" which Bill Sullivan prepared prior to departure for Honolulu. He gave a copy of this general paper of instructions to Mr. Robinson, Minister-Counselor of the Canadian Embassy, on May 30.

At your request I have prepared and am enclosing a draft of a further outline in specific terms of the message which we would expect the Canadian interlocutor to get across in Hanoi. This further outline is based on the assumptions that (a) a U.S. decision has been taken to act against North Viet-Nam and (b) we plan to use "carrots" as well as a "stick" on Hanoi. I believe that we would probably not wish to hand this further outline to the Canadian Government pending the initial soundings of the Canadian interlocutor in Hanoi pursuant to Mr. Sullivan's original set of instructions.